

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Harkins: Legislature Must Revisit Electric Deregulation



HARTFORD – State Rep. John Harkins, R-Stratford, today called on leaders of the General Assembly’s Energy and Technology Committee to begin drafting legislation that would address a 22.4 percent increase in electricity bills that will begin hitting many Connecticut consumers immediately.

On Tuesday, December 28, the Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) granted Connecticut Light and Power’s (CL&P) request for the rate increase. CL&P customers will see a 17.5 increase beginning with power supplied from January 1 and another 4.9 percent in April. CL&P’s request is related to its own electricity purchasing costs. According to published reports, the company cited increases in fossil fuel prices and federal mandates for hiking its own prices.

“We need to readdress our energy needs and supply in a practical manner,” said Rep. Harkins, who serves as an Assistant Minority Leader. “We are not seeing the industry competition envisioned when deregulation was enacted. Rising energy costs related to supply must also be addressed on a federal level. Most importantly, the State cannot paint itself into a corner when it comes to energy policy.”

Deregulation legislation approved by the Legislature in 1998 was intended to lower rates for residents and businesses, end electric monopolies and encourage new power plants. The deregulation bill initially established rate caps at 10 percent below 1996 rates. The caps were intended to safeguard consumers until a free market for power was in place.

“The Energy and Technology committee, more than ever, needs to begin taking up initiatives to prevent future spikes in prices,” said Rep. Harkins. “This issue is not unique to Connecticut. Con Edison in New York City is hiking prices by 36 percent this month. The price of energy affects homeowners and businesses alike. If we continue to see excessive increases, the result will be a loss of industry and jobs that will be devastating to our area.”